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THE NATURAL HISTORY POSSIBILITIES OF BELVIDERE,
KAN., AND VICINITY.

BY C. N. GOULD.

To the student of natural history there is no more interesting locality than the country surrounding Belvidere. Nestled among the low, rounded hills of the upper Medicine valley, the little village is indeed picturesque. The gentle slopes covered with cattle, the broad, fertile valley, the rushing stream, clear with the sparkling water from the hills, the clumps of elms and cottonwoods fringing its banks; and over all the grim old sentinel, Osage rock, standing eternal as the hill of which it forms a part, all combine to render the scene unforgettable.

Here have the great men of Kansas science labored. Professor St. John, Robert Hay, Colonel Goss, and others who have gone to complete their investigations in the great unknown have here spent weeks in research. Chancellor Snow found meteorites here. Professor Cragin traveled over these hills and wrote his famous paper "A Study of the Belvidere Beds." Professor Smyth collected here for the National Herbarium at Washington. Professor Hill came from Washington, Professor Prosser from New York, and Professor Ward from the Smithsonian Institution. Each of these testifies to the wealth of material to be found in the vicinity. Doctor Williston has here found bones of extinct reptiles. Professors Hitchcock and Failyer came here from Manhattan; one to collect rare plants, the other to analyze water from the medicinal springs of the Indians.

The problematic Red Beds are well developed a few miles down the river. Upon these the Comanche Cretaceous lies unconformably. This apparently grades upward through a series of transition beds into the true leaf-bearing Dakota sandstone, which in turn is covered with the Loup Fork Tertiary and Pleistocene. In the line of paleontology few localities yield a greater diversity of fossils. Professor Hill, in 1894, first found dicotyledonous leaves in the Cheyenne sandstone, and Professor Ward, in his two summers in the field, has discovered scores of species; Professors Cragin and Hill have collected numerous invertebrates from the Kiowa shales. Doctor Williston finds saurian, crocodile, and fish bones in this horizon. Insects have also been found in the shales. On the hills and in the Medicine valley bones of Pleistocene mammals are to be found.

The botany is excellent. Professor Ward has found the Texas mesquite on the hills and the soapberry on the creeks. The ornithologist will be interested in such birds as the Mississippi kite and the scissor-tail flycatcher; and the entomologist will here find insects galore.

On the Osage rock are pictographs left by the Indians, and on the cañon walls in the vicinity may be found records engraven of deeds of daring and bravery. Old settlers will tell of implements and traces of dwellings found along the creeks and in the ravines, and over all hang the mystic traditions of Indian battles and cavalry raids.

The work of a lifetime lies within the hills surrounding the valley. Much has been done, but more remains to be done. Fortunate will he be who in this region devotes himself to the task of learning nature's secrets.